



Balance Your Day With Food & Play!

Target Audience

Parents and caregivers

Behavior Objectives

Parents and caregivers who participate in this activity will be able to:

- Identify at least one action to get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week.
- State at least one action to get the right amount of foods from the MyPyramid food groups.

Lesson Overview



20-MINUTE ACTIVITY!

Allow extra time if there are more than 10 participants.

Optional: **Play the Power Panther music** as parents gather.

- As an activity opener, ask parents to think about their own attitudes and what they can do to balance their day with food and play.
- Use the *Balance Your Day With Food & Play* poster and brochure and copies of the *MyPyramid* mini-poster to discuss the amount of time to be active and amounts of food to eat. Help parents explore how to be active at least 30 minutes every day and how to eat the right amounts and types of foods. Being healthy involves balancing what they eat with what they do.
- Using one of two different examples, have the group discuss ways to be active and ideas to help balance their food choices with being active.
- Give each parent the *MyPyramid* mini-poster and the *Balance Your Day With Food & Play* brochure that they can share with others at home. During the session, parents will write at least one action they will do in the next week (on their brochure) to identify the amount of foods eaten at a meal, and ways to be more active.

**Healthy eating
habits and
physical activity
work together for
better health.**

Materials

- **Optional: Download the Power Panther music to a CD.** Arrange to play it at the beginning of the session:
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/Collection/collect_kids_3.html
- **Make nametags. Use the Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ stickers** to decorate them:
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/Collection/collect_kids_2.html
- **Hang the *Balance Your Day With Food & Play* poster.** Obtain it in advance from:
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/collection/tools_posters.html
- **Provide copies of the *Balance Your Day With Food & Play* brochure.** Download it from the web at:
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/collection/Files/balance_brochure.pdf
- **Download and make copies of *MyPyramid* mini-poster** (8½" x 11") for each participant:
www.mypyramid.gov
- **Optional – Display measuring cups and measuring spoons.** Use them to practice estimating amounts of foods.
- **Bring pencils** for parents to use.



Background Information for Leaders

Use this information to guide your learning activities with parents. It's meant as background for you.

Being healthy involves active living and smart eating. Being active is fun and has many health benefits. Adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity above their usual activity most days of the week, preferably daily. No matter what activity, you can do it all at once or spread it out during the day. Add activities to your daily routine, such as gardening, walking to and from a bus or train, using stairs, cleaning house, or playing with children. Fit in a regular exercise program, such as swimming, bicycling, power walking, or playing a team sport. Or do both.

Eat for health by choosing to follow the MyPyramid guidance for the food groups. Eat enough fruits and vegetables; at least half your grains as whole-grain foods; enough low-fat or fat-free milk or foods made from low-fat or fat-free milk; and lean meats and beans. Eat less often foods high in saturated fat or *trans* fat, or with added sugars.

Be aware of the amounts of foods served at meal times and snacks. Use measuring cups and measuring spoons to become familiar with the size of different amounts of food such as 1 cup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, 1 tablespoon. Encourage parents to measure foods a few times to learn to estimate the amount of food they eat, compared to the recommended amounts from the MyPyramid food groups.

Compare what you eat to the recommended amounts shown on the *MyPyramid* mini-poster to get enough, but not too much, food. Women who are somewhat active need about 2,000 calories a day. Inactive women need less food and fewer calories. Many men and teen boys need more food. For a personalized plan for healthy eating, go to the *MyPyramid Plan* at the following web site:

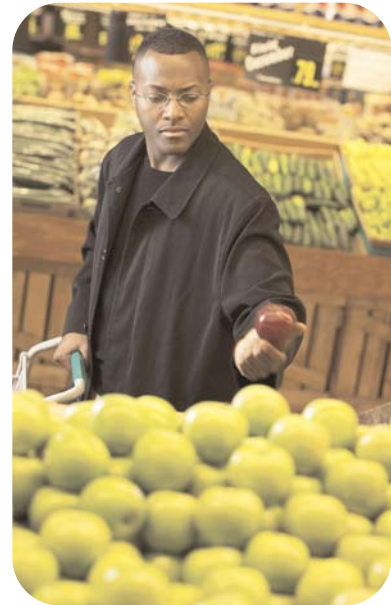
www.mypyramid.gov



Information for Leaders *(continued)*

Adults play an important role in making sure that family members and children eat the right amounts and types of foods, and are active and moving every day. Adults who are physically active and routinely choose to eat right set an example for their children, too.

Additional activities can reinforce the idea of balancing food and activity choices in other settings such as at home, in the community, or during one-on-one counseling.



Teaching Activities

Optional: Set a lively tone by playing the Power Panther music as they gather and fill out their name tags.

1. Point to the poster *Balance Your Day With Food & Play*.

- Ask:** What do you think it means to balance what you eat with what you do?
- Ask:** How would you rate your typical day (using 1 = poor to 5 = great) for being able to balance both food and activity?
- Ask:** Imagine being a gymnast on a balance beam. Would you think it's easy or hard to walk on that long narrow board?
- Explain:** Being balanced takes skill, practice, and a “can-do” attitude.
- Ask:** Think about it. What does it take to maintain balance between being physically active and choosing the foods we need?
- Ask:** What skills and actions would help make it easier to maintain better balance between food and physical activity?

2. Distribute the *Balance Your Day With Food & Play* brochure:

- Point out** that the brochure gives three key messages:
 - Set an example.** Keep the right kinds of foods on hand.
 - Consider serving sizes.** Be aware of the amounts of foods eaten.
 - Be active.** Adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week.

Teaching Activities (continued)

3. Explore the challenges of balancing physical activity and what you eat.

- **Point out** that no matter what physical activity you choose, you can either do it all in 30 minutes, or do it 10 minutes each at three different times during the day.
- **Ask:** What gets in the way of being active?
- **Explore solutions** to common situations. Discuss one of the following examples to figure out how to balance what you do with what you eat.
 - “*Suppose you sit all day at work and find it hard to be active ...*”
 - **Ask:** For easy ways to get moving, what can you do? Come up with a list of ideas for being more physically active.
 - “*Suppose you have to watch small children all day.*”
 - **Ask:** To get moving, what can you do? Come up with a list of practical ideas for being active while caring for children.
- **Point out** that the brochure gives suggestions for daily activities like walking more, using the stairs, or working in the yard. It also gives a place to write ideas for things you can do to be more physically active.

4. Encourage parents to think about the amount of food they eat.

- **Give the** *MyPyramid* mini-poster to each participant.
- **Point out:** It’s important to know how much you eat of different foods from the food groups. Compare what you eat to the kinds and amounts of foods shown on the mini-poster.
- **Point out:** The amounts of food are described in cups or ounces.
- **Show measuring cups and spoons**
- **Point out:** It’s easy to estimate the amounts of foods if you practice measuring foods a few times using a measuring cup or measuring spoons.
- **Ask:** How would a plate look with:
 - 1 cup of sweet potatoes,
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup tomato wedges, and
 - 1 cup of broccoli
- **Ask:** How does the amount of vegetables on the imaginary plate compare to the amount the mini-poster recommends for vegetables? (*It’s the same amount.*)



Teaching Activities *(continued)*

- Ask:** What counts as a cup of vegetables?
- Sum up:** In general, 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw leafy greens, can be considered as 1 cup from the vegetable group. Go to: www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/vegetables_counts_table.html
- Ask:** How many cups of foods from the vegetable group do you eat each day? What changes could they make to get the recommended amounts of vegetables?
- Sum up:** Balancing food choices to get what you need can be done by making small changes. Each day, eat the recommended amounts of foods from the various food groups.



5. Pass out the pencils.

6. Let's take time to plan to make changes:



- During this next week, what actions can you do to be more active and eat the right amounts of foods?
- There is a place on the brochure for you to write your plans for balancing the foods you eat and being more physically active at work or at home.

7. Remember if you are physically active and routinely choose to eat smart, your children will learn to do so, too.



Talk to Parents One-on-One...

If you have time, here is an individualized approach you might want to use.

Often, talking with parents one-on-one about healthy eating and active living allows for more personalized advice. Discuss information of interest to them, including what steps they can take.

- 1. Find out** what parents want to know about balancing their food choices and level of activity.

Ask:

- What kinds of foods do you eat too much, or too little, of?
- What choices could you make to get the kinds of foods you need?
- Do you get at least 30 minutes of physical activity during the day?
- What could you do to be more active during the day?
- What else would you like to know that could help you eat healthier or move more?

- 2. Share information** related to what parents want to know.

- Go over the messages in the *Balance Your Day With Food & Play* brochure.
- Focus on what parents said they would like to learn.
- Reinforce the importance of setting an example for their children.

- 3. Help parents set realistic goals and actions.**

- What goals could you set to make better food and physical activity choices?
- Help parents set realistic goals. Have them write only one or two goals on the back of the brochure.
- What actions can you take to meet your goal(s)? Help parents choose specific actions, such as making sure they have a variety of vegetables in the kitchen, to be served at meals or snacks.

- 4. Encourage parents** to make these new actions a habit. Each action moves you closer toward a healthier you, and a healthier family.



At-Home Activities

As you talk with parents, suggest these activities.

- **Step It Up** ...Encourage parents to start walking with their children as a way to help families balance sitting time with moving time. Have each parent and child set a personal goal, perhaps 500 more steps (or $\frac{1}{2}$ hour of active time) this week and 500 more steps next week until they reach their own personal goal.
- **Set a “Healthy” Table** ...Family mealtime is a chance for great role modeling! And the *Eat Smart. Play Hard.*[™] activity sheets make great placemats to learn about healthy eating and balancing the day with food and play. During mealtime, families can talk about the “comics,” “Power Points” tips, and Power Panther quotes on their placemats. After eating, children can play the games with their parents. Parents can download the activity sheets from the Web site.

Several different activity sheets are available on-line. To view and download:
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/collection/kids_activity.html



Community Activities

- **Junior Chefs ...**For a neighborhood or community event or church group gathering, plan a junior chef demo to show healthy snacks families can make for good nutrition and to balance their snacks with their lifestyle. Invite child-parent teams to demonstrate one of Power Panther's easy snacks from the *Eat Smart. Play Hard.*™ activity sheets, such as the Fruit Shake, Chili Popcorn, Snack Mix, Fruit Sundae, or Tuna Pita Sandwich. Make copies of the activity sheet(s) with the recipes.

The activity sheets are available on-line. To view and download:
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/collection/kids_activity.html



Useful Resources

- **Additional Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ Resources:**
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard
- **Additional Team Nutrition Resources:**
www.fns.usda.gov/tn
- **Additional Federal Government Resources:**
General and specific nutrition information is available from:
www.nutrition.gov
- **The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion/USDA**
Find out about the *MyPyramid Food Guidance System*:
www.mypyramid.gov
- **The Food and Nutrition Information Center/USDA**
Child Nutrition and Health Web sites:
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/ooooo8.html

We want to hear from you! Share your success stories with the Food and Nutrition Service by sending news clippings, photos, and event descriptions to: eatsmartplayhard@fns.usda.gov